

## Believing vs. Doing...

...and a problem with cross-addiction

I once had an exchange with a chronic re-starter, who enumerated all her problems to a lowcarb support group. **"Issue #1, I believe in lowcarb, it's the only diet that works for me."** We hear similar things often from people who cannot bring themselves to stay on lowcarb long-term. They seem to be stuck trying to *believe* themselves into it.

I once read this little gem in a self-help forum.

*"It is a lot easier to act ourselves into new thinking than it is to think ourselves into a new action. This means that if we don't have the right feelings, we shouldn't wait until they come. Just the opposite. We must work on our actions and the right feelings will follow."*

Emotional maturity is not the absence of negative feelings. We all feel all kinds of negative feelings, and will continue to do so no matter how we eat and how much we weigh. That's what "normal" feels and lives like. But emotionally mature individuals recognize what the feelings are, admit them, can sort of calmly examine and sort them into important and not-so-important, then seek to express the important ones in ways that are relevant and appropriate, not harmful to themselves or others.

In the context of this forum, I think healthy lowcarbing is the best way to honor my body (and that honoring my body is one of the most fundamental ways I honor my own higher power and thus my little place in this big universe). But I didn't honestly believe that until I had DONE it (correctly for my body) for a very long time.

*Those feelings followed the actions.*

The poster went on to say, **"I have been very nervous about "speaking up" in a group like this. So let's call that issue #2. How do I face my goals without embarrassment and with accountability?"**

You can't. So maybe you just BE embarrassed and accountable? What is the worst that could happen if you ARE embarrassed? We can't see you blushing, y'know. I don't think I've seen anyone shamed here. We do sometimes blow holes through flawed "logic" and inconsistencies we observe in ourselves and others. I'll bet you can handle that? And if you can't, then honestly, it's unlikely that you're ready to make the changes.

You cannot engineer unpleasant feelings out of your life. Nervousness and embarrassment are unpleasant feelings. You seem to be saying you want to do this but you don't want it to hurt or be uncomfortable in any way. That's just plain impossible.

I'll grant you that the lowcarb books DO gloss over the emotional challenges of doing this over the long haul. They wouldn't sell nearly so many books if they laid this part of it wide open. Just the same as they wouldn't sell many books if they said 99% of the people who attempt to lose weight this way—or any other—end up weighing even more within 2-3 years.

As for accountability, I decided on self-accountability when I started on this journey. I acknowledged that my 30+-year pattern was to stop weighing myself the moment I strayed from whatever dietary path I was on. Going into lowcarb in September 1996, I vowed to weigh every single day for the rest of my life, no matter what I ate and I have kept to that—for more than 13 years now. That was the first behavior change I led with.

And then here came an acknowledgement of what is most surely her even deeper cross-addiction issue... **Issue #3 I am mad that I cannot follow this WOE and also drink any alcohol.**

Right now, I think this appears to be your core issue. This is where you need to start. Because it sure doesn't look like you're going to get any farther in your weight loss journey until you do.

**I have learned that I binge on food when I drink alcohol. I am very mad and sad about this.**

Ever considered that you can BE mad and sad about this, or anything else, and still not drink? Has it occurred to you that THIS is the rock-bottom foundational part of the "emotional maturity" moving toward your goals is going to require from you?

**I do not view myself as an alcoholic (maybe some would define me as that given my struggle with this issue) but just very social and this has always been ritualistic part of it for many years. As I said, I am really fighting this one. I feel weak, unsuccessful and defeated.**

Overall I wonder if you aren't using all this thinking and describing of your feelings about yourself and alcohol as an excuse or procrastination for not doing what you need to? If indeed it's merely ritualistic, then club soda with a slice of lime in a cocktail glass should take care of it. If it doesn't—if it actually matters *a lot* what's in that glass—you can still NOT drink. You can either endure, and eventually pass through, the relatively minor, fleeting pain of not drinking. Or, or if it turns out that it's more serious than that, well, the professional and societal help to get you through that is out there for the taking.

**I am also feeling self-conscious because usually web groups talk technical about lowcarb and not the other "stuff" that lurks behind eating.**

I don't think you will find that here. I talk a lot about the emotional side of this journey, that remains an important part of what got and keeps me at goal. But I will also keep bringing up the "what are you *doing*?" part of this in conjunction with our discussions

because for addicts what we are doing (and not doing) very much affects our emotions. It is my belief that what we do (what we eat and in your case drink) LEADS our emotions, and thus, for addicted eaters (and no doubt drinkers too), the way to settle and smooth our constantly changing emotions is to abstain from our mood-altering substances and lead our lives from that calmer, "sober" vantage point. That is simply as emotionally anchored as a human being can ever get.

**Bottom line, I am in this for the long term, I will reach my goal (not sure how I will get there personally) and would like to make the journey in the company of others.**

Bottom line is that to reach your goal, you need to change your eating (and drinking) behaviors, and that until you do, you're going to continue to be mad and sad and frustrated about the results. I can talk to you about your feelings while you do that. But if you don't change the binge-eating that is triggered by drinking, you'll stay stuck right where you are, no matter how much you talk about your feelings and no matter how much you believe in lowcarb.

And the other bottom line? She disappeared from that group quickly. Sigh.

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